

WHOPPER

I'm walking down the street
in one of Portland's seedier neighborhoods,
on my way to attend the Jim Rose freak show.

I'm a little screwed-up
from too many bourbons
and some questionable sweet-and-sour
at Hung Far Low

And the bartendress had punctuated my meal
with detailed updates concerning the surgery
her mother was undergoing for bladder cancer
or something.

As I'm about to round a corner
this guy kind of insinuates himself
from the shadows and addresses me:
HEY, MAN — I JUST GOT RELEASED FROM JAIL THIS MORNING
AND I HAVEN'T EATEN SINCE THEN.
I COULD SURE USE A COUPLE WHOPPERS.

"Oh," I say, "what were you in for?"

SOME BOGUS FUCKING NON-SUPPORT PAYMENT THING.
YOU KNOW HOW IT IS.

"Not really," I say.

SO ANYWAY, HOW ABOUT THOSE WHOPPERS?

"What about them?"

IF YOU CAN GIVE ME TWO BUCKS,
THEY'RE HAVING A SPECIAL DEAL —
TWO WHOPPERS FOR \$1.99.

I took out my wallet and surveyed the cash.
"I only have one single, but you're welcome to it."

I SEE YOU'VE GOT A TEN THERE
I COULD SURE USE THAT.

"Well, I intend to use that myself," I say,
growing a bit weary with the direction
this exchange is heading.

Scott Schafer

"Do you want the buck or not?"

LISTEN — I KNOW WHERE I CAN GET CHANGE
FOR THE TEN. FOLLOW ME.

I can't believe this guy's gall and,
out of curiosity
and the perversity which has brought me here
in the first place,
I follow him down the street.

THEY KNOW ME IN HERE
he says as he rustles me into
a dreary little beer bar
called "Al's."

We walk up to the bar
and the bartender says to my escort,
"I thought I told you to stay the fuck out of here."

I JUST NEED SOME CHANGE, MAN,
A FIVE AND FIVE SINGLES.

I give my new friend the ten
and he hands it to the bartender,
who deposits it in the till and says,
"O.K. asshole — now you only owe me
thirty-five. Get lost."

"Hey — wait a second," I say,
"that was my ten."

"You got that right. Now, both of you — OUT!"

Back out on the street the guy says,
HEY, MAN — I'M SORRY ABOUT THAT
YOU WANNA GO GET SOME BURGERS
OR SOMETHING?

"I'll pass," I say,
and head on towards the theater
where the freak show is being held.

HEY, MAN — DON'T I STILL GET THE SINGLE?
I hear, as I move down the street.

At the box office I learn
all the tickets have been sold-out
for days.

But I'm not really disappointed.
I feel I've already seen the show.